

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5644

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PEPR, AF
SUBJECT: PARTY'S PURGE MIGHT SLOW NEW REGIME'S EMBRANCE OF
MOSCOW

1. SUMMARY. THE BLOODLESS EXPULSION OF THE LEADERS OF THE FORMER PARCHAM WING OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) COULD ENHANCE THE STABILITY OF THE REGIME BY PERMITTING THE PREDOMINANT FACTION TO DEVOTE MORE OF ITS ATTENTION OF IMPLEMENTING ITS PROGRAMS, RATHER THAN CONCENTRATING ON AN INTRA-PARTY STRUGGLE. EVEN THOUGH MORE PARCHAMISTS MAY BE OUSTED, THE DEPARTURE OF THE FACTION'S SIX LEADERS TO AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD ACCOUNTS FOR THE PRINCIPAL FIGURES AROUND WHOM ANY PRO-PARCHAM MOVEMENT COULD REASSERT ITSELF, AND INDICATES THAT, THIS PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IS PROBABLY OVER. THE EPISODE MAY RESULT IN A SLIGHT COOLING OF THE REGIME'S PRO-SOVIET PASSION, AND COULD THEREBY BENEFIT TO SOME DEGREE U.S. INTERESTS IN GENUINE AFGHAN
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INDEPENDENCE. ANY CHANGES ALONG THESE LINES WILL BE SMALL, HOWEVER, FOR WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS REGARDING THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF TARAQI AND HIS IMMEDIATE ASSOCIATES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE APPOINTMENT OF BABRAK KARMAL, LEADER OF THE PARCHAM WING DURING THE PDPA'S 1967-77 SPLIT, TO PRAGUE, AND THAT OF HIS LONG-TERM RIGHT HAND MAN, NOOR AHMAD NOOR, TO WASHINGTON,

AS WELL AS OF FOUR OTHERS TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES, EFFECTIVELY DECAPI-
TATES ONE OF THE TWO MAJOR GROUPS WITHIN THE PDPA, AND
LEAVES SECRETARY GENERAL NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI AND HIS KHALQIST
COLLEAGUES APPARENTLY IN COMPLETE CHARGE. FURTHER SCHISMS
WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP COULD ERUPT AT ANY TIME -- FOR EXAMPLE,
ALONG MILITARY-CIVILIAN, PARTY-NON-PARTY, OR NATIONALIST-
PRO-SOVIET LINES -- BUT THE SMOOTHNESS WITH WHICH THIS
PARTICULAR PURGE UNFOLDED UNDERSCORES THE APPARENT SUPPORT THE
REGIME COMMANDS WITHIN THE MILITARY AND AMONG THE REMAINING
PDPA MEMBERSHIP. ALTHOUGH THIS SUPPORT FOR TARAKI ET AL COULD
PROVE TO BE TRANSITORY, ONE POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING FACTION
HAS BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY, THEREBY POSSIBLY
CONTRIBUTING TO SOME DEGREE TO THE REGIME'S SECURITY.

3. ASIDE FROM THE STABILITY RAMIFICATIONS, THESE DEVELOP-
MENTS COULD PORTEND SOME COOLING IN THE REGIME'S HERETOFORE INTENSE
PRO-SOVIET ARDOR. THE PARCHAM FACTION HAS FOR YEARS BEEN
CONSIDERED MORE STRONGLY SOVIET ORIENTED THAN THE MORE
NATIONALIST TARAKI FACTION, AND THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE NEW
REVOLUTIONARY REGIME EMBRACED ITS "GREAT NORTHERN NEIGHBOR" AFTER
THE APRIL REVOLUTION MAY HAVE BEEN A REFLECTION OF PARCHAM INFLUENCE
ON GOVERNMENT DECISIONS. IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS INFLUENCE,
HOWEVER, AFGHAN POLICIES COULD BECOME LESS UNBALANCED, WITH MORE
STRESS PLACED ON AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY.

4. ANY POST-PURGE DIFFERENCE WHICH MIGHT EMERGE, HOWEVER,
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WILL BE SLIGHT, BECAUSE TARAKI'S LEFTIST CREDENTIALS AND
IRREFUTABLE. THE FACT THAT MOSCOW ACQUIESCED IN THE PURGE,
AND DID NOT INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF THE PARCHAMISTS, UNDERSCORES THE
PROBABLE SOVIET VIEW THAT THE PARCHAM-KHALQ DIFFERENCES WERE
MORE PERSONAL THAN SUBSTANTIVE, AND THAT A PURELY KHALQ CONTROLLED
REGIME IN KABUL STILL SERVES SOVIET INTERESTS.

5. AS FOR PERSONALITIES, THE AFFAIR HAS CLEARLY ENHANCED THE
STATUS AND POWER OF "COMRADE" TARAKI (A TITLE NOW USED IN THE
MEDIA), AND THE FURTHER BUILDING OF THE "GREAT LEADER'S" CULT OF
PERSONALITY PROCEEDS APACE. DEFINITELY EMERGING AS NUMBER
TWO IN POLITICAL POWER IS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN
MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN, A REPORTED RIVAL OF BABRAK AND NOOR
SINCE AT LEAST THEIR DAYS AS REPRESENTATIVES IN THE MONARCHY'S
PARLIAMENT. IT WAS ANNOUNCED JULY 9 THAT, IN ADDITION TO HIS
OTHER DUTIES, AMIN WOULD HENCEFORTH SERVE AS THE SECRETARY OF
THE PDPA CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S SECRETARIAT.

6. U.S. INTERESTS COULD FARE A BIT BETTER AS A RESULT OF THESE
EXPULSIONS IF, IN FACT, THE REGIME SLOWS ITS RUSH TOWARD THE
RUSSIAN BEAR, AND FOCUSES MORE ON PRESERVING ITS OWN
NATIONALISM. THUS, THERE IS SOME SLIGHT COMFORT TO BE GAINED FROM

THE EXPULSION OF THE PARCHAM LEADERS, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NO
ILLUSIONS REGARDING THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF TARAKI AND HIS
COLLEAGUES.
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